

In the Claims

1. (Currently amended) A method of correlating a purchaser of an electronically-purchased item ("EPI") with the EPI, said EPI to be subsequently received/consumed by said purchaser, comprising:

a purchasing step, wherein purchaser-related financial and digital certificate information is transferred to a seller of said EPI and verification-related digital certificate information is transferred to said purchaser; and

a verification step, wherein said purchaser and said EPI are correlated by requiring said purchaser to provide said verification-related digital certificate information before receiving/consuming said EPI and by electronically comparing said verification-related digital certificate information with a redemption document representing said EPI.

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2. (Currently amended) The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein said purchasing step includes at least the steps of:

creating an electronically-readable indicia corresponding to said verification-related digital certificate information; and

associating said electronically-readable indicia with said redemption document representing said EPI.

3. (Currently amended) The method as set forth in claim 2, wherein said verification step comprises:

electronically reading said verification-related digital certificate information from said electronically-readable indicia into a verification system prior to receiving/consuming said EPI; and

comparing said read verification-related digital certificate information with verification-related digital certificate information provided by a person attempting to receive/consume the EPI.

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4. (Currently amended) The method as set forth in claim 3, wherein the EPI is authorized to be released to said person attempting to receive/consume the EPI is authorized to do so only after the redemption document representing said EPI is confirmed to have associated therewith verification-related digital certificate information corresponding to the verification-related digital certificate information provided by said receiving/consuming party.

5. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said verification-related digital certificate information comprises an encrypted data file containing personal data pertaining to said purchaser.

6. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said verification-related digital certificate information comprises a data file containing encrypted data pertaining to said EPI.

7. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said digital certificate information comprises an encrypted data file containing personal data pertaining to said purchaser and data pertaining to said EPI.

8. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said purchaser-related digital certificate information is provided by data stored on a smart card.

9. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said purchaser-related digital certificate information is supplied from data stored on a PDA.

10. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said purchaser-related information is supplied from data stored on a cellular telephone.

11. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 2, wherein said electronically-readable indicia comprises bar coding.

12. (Original) A method of correlating a purchased item to be picked up by a purchaser with the purchaser of the item, comprising the steps of:

transferring indicia of verification-related digital certificate information to the purchased item;

requiring said purchaser to present said verification-related digital certificate information upon picking up said item; and

correlating said purchased item with the purchaser of the item by electronically comparing said verification-related digital certificate information presented by said purchaser with said indicia.

13. (Currently amended) A method of correlating a purchased redeemable ticket (PRD) with the purchaser of the redeemable ticket, comprising:

a purchasing step, wherein purchaser-related financial and digital certificate information is transferred to a seller of said PRD and verification-related digital certificate information is transferred to said purchaser; and

a verification step, wherein said purchaser and said PRD are correlated by requiring said purchaser to provide said verification-related digital certificate information before receiving redeeming said PRD and by electronically comparing said verification-related digital certificate information with said PRD.

14. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 13, wherein said purchasing step includes at least the steps of:

creating an electronically-readable indicia corresponding to said verification-related digital certificate information; and
associating said electronically-readable indicia with said PRD.

15. (Currently amended) The method as set forth in claim 14, wherein said verification step comprises:

electronically reading said verification-related digital certificate information from said electronically-readable indicia into a verification system prior to ~~receiving~~ redeeming said PRD; and

comparing said read verification-related digital certificate information with verification-related digital certificate information provided by a person attempting to ~~receive~~ redeem the PRD.

16. (Currently amended) The method as set forth in claim 15, wherein the PRD is authorized to be ~~released to~~ redeemed said person attempting to ~~receive~~ redeem the PRD only after the PRD is confirmed to have associated therewith verification-related digital certificate information corresponding to the verification-related digital certificate information provided by said receiving party.

17. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said verification-related digital certificate information comprises an encrypted data file containing personal data pertaining to said purchaser.

18. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said verification-related digital certificate information comprises a data file containing encrypted data pertaining to said PRD.

19. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said digital certificate information comprises an encrypted data file containing personal data pertaining to said purchaser and data pertaining to said PRD.

20. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said purchaser-related digital certificate information is provided by data stored on a smart card.

21. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said purchaser-related digital certificate information is supplied from data stored on a PDA.

22. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said purchaser-related information is supplied from data stored on a cellular telephone.

23. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 13, wherein said electronically-readable indicia comprises bar coding.
